

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8724

To amend title 5, United States Code, to establish First Responders Day as a Federal holiday, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 2, 2020

Mr. RUSH (for himself and Mr. NORMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To amend title 5, United States Code, to establish First Responders Day as a Federal holiday, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “First Responders Day Act”.

6 (b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

7 (1) During times of national crisis, first re-
8 sponders have consistently been a source of aid,
9 hope, and comfort for all Americans.

1 (2) The National Fire Protection Association
2 estimates that there are 1,150,000 either career or
3 volunteer firefighters in the United States.

4 (3) The Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
5 vention (CDC) estimate that there were 240,800
6 full-time Emergency Management Services (EMS)
7 workers as of 2018, including paramedics and emer-
8 gency medical technicians.

9 (4) According to the Federal Bureau of Inves-
10 tigation's Criminal Justice Information Services divi-
11 sion, there were 670,279 law enforcement officers in
12 the United States as of 2017.

13 (5) 446 firefighters, paramedics, and police offi-
14 cers were killed while selflessly attempting to save
15 others on September 11, 2001.

16 (6) As of September 2020, 227 members of the
17 Fire Department of the city of New York have lost
18 their lives due to illnesses related to their heroic
19 work at Ground Zero during or in the wake of the
20 September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

21 (7) According to CBS 2 New York, two-thirds
22 of Ground Zero first responders have at least one
23 certified health condition in connection to their serv-
24 ice.

1 (8) Since 2010, there have been 670 firefighter
2 deaths in the line of duty, according to the National
3 Fire Protection Association.

4 (9) Research from the CDC in 2017 found a 14
5 percent higher rate of deaths from cancer for fire-
6 fighters in comparison to the general population.

7 (10) The exposure to traumatic events in the
8 line of duty has led to an estimated 15 percent of
9 police officers experiencing post-traumatic stress dis-
10 order, according to the United States Department of
11 Justice's Office of Community Policing Service's
12 newsletter, The Dispatch.

13 (11) A 2018 survey of 7,000 firefighters in
14 New York and California found that 19 percent had
15 experienced suicidal thoughts, and 65 percent are
16 haunted by traumatic situations in the line of duty,
17 highlighting the emotional toll of these essential and
18 lifesaving jobs.

19 (12) Firefighters have been bravely battling the
20 fatal and destructive wildfires in the Western States,
21 which have killed dozens of people, burned over
22 3,200,000 acres of land, and destroyed 4,200 struc-
23 tures in California in 2020 alone.

24 (13) The over 16,000 firefighters working to
25 contain the 28 major fires in California have been

1 on the front lines of this crisis, working around the
2 clock to salvage any lives, land, and property that
3 they can.

4 (14) Firefighters have battled physical and
5 emotional exhaustion, and in some instances given
6 their lives, while combating the destructive wildfires
7 on the West Coast.

8 (15) The mental burden carried by police offi-
9 cers and firefighters is somberly demonstrated by
10 the statistic that, in 2017, there were more fire-
11 fighter and police officer deaths by suicide than in
12 the line of duty, according to the Ruderman Family
13 Foundation.

14 (16) As of September 2020, there have been at
15 least 100 confirmed police officer deaths as a result
16 of contracting COVID-19 in the line of duty, ac-
17 cording to the Officer Down Memorial Page.

18 (17) EMS workers provide critical and life-
19 saving care, often at great risk to themselves.

20 (18) The CDC notes that EMS workers are at
21 risk for physical injury and exposure to blood and
22 harmful bodily fluids.

23 (19) The CDC estimates that 21,200 EMS
24 were treated in emergency rooms for work-related
25 illnesses and injuries in 2017.

1 (20) The serious dangers faced by EMS work-
2 ers during the COVID–19 pandemic are highlighted
3 by the 36 reported EMS worker deaths from
4 COVID–19 as of September 17, 2020, according to
5 EMS1, an online resource for EMTs and Para-
6 medics.

7 (21) It is the sense of Congress that the sac-
8 rifices made by first responders and frontline work-
9 ers warrants the designation of making October
10 28th a national holiday entitled “First Responders
11 Day”.

12 **SEC. 2. FIRST RESPONDERS DAY.**

13 Section 6103(a) of title 5, United States Code, is
14 amended by inserting after the item relating to Columbus
15 Day, the following:

16 “First Responders Day.”.

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